

Working on Providing Power to Rural Liberia? Your Company Could Win a Grant!

Power Africa Off-Grid Challenge – Round II **The Challenge is Clear – The Time is Now**

Power Africa has brought all corners of the US Government together to tackle a challenge of monumental proportions with the potential to reap substantial development dividends. Power fuels economic growth, it also lights homes so children can study at night, illuminates clinics saving lives at childbirth, and chills medication to ward off unwanted disease. This is one development battle that, if we come together, we can win.

Most have concentrated on the BIG energy gains – setting sound policy environments, facilitating power plant transactions and paving the way for utility companies to deliver energy for industry and growing urban centers. Yet, as we know, more than 60% of Africa is home to rural communities who not only are not served by the grid today, but are unlikely to be reached anytime soon. What does Power Africa mean for these communities?

We believe that Africa's energy entrepreneurs are in the process of inventing the answer to this question. All across the continent we are seeing entrepreneurs and communities come together to create new ways of generating and delivering renewable energy while making it available and affordable to remote households, schools, clinics and local industries.

To spur this wave of innovation, the US African Development Foundation (USADF) has teamed up with General Electric Africa and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to launch the Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Challenge. This business plan competition will provide \$100,000 to 100% African-owned and managed companies that are inventing innovative business solutions to meet the power needs of rural communities. Eligible countries include: Ghana, [Liberia](#), Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. The challenge was kicked off on May 7th, with applications due by June 20th, 2014. Awards will be granted before October 1st, 2014. For more information on applying, check out <http://www.usadf.gov/offgrid/PowerAfricaChallenge-Round2.htm>

There are a growing number of technologies already available and each year, the costs of renewable energy are coming down. The question now remains – who can make this commercially and sustainably accessible to the millions of homes, clinics and schools that need electricity to function – not to mention the tens of thousands of small businesses who need energy to scale?

This current round of the Off-Grid Energy Challenge builds on the successful first round, conceived and executed by USADF and GE Africa in 2013. Initially open only in Kenya and Nigeria, the call for proposals was met with submissions from nearly 150 applicants, culminating with six dynamic winners:

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- **Solar World (E.A.) Ltd.** will construct 5 solar-powered water points to address provide water and electricity to pastoralists in the semi-arid lands in northern Kenya
- **Afrisol Energy Ltd.** will utilize bio-digesters to produce electricity and biogas for small businesses in Nairobi's urban slums
- **Mibawa Suppliers** will expand its delivery of pay-as-you-go lighting and chargers to households in rural parts of western Kenya
- **TransAfrica Gas and Electric** will power stand-alone cold storage facilities with solar photovoltaic systems for farmers and fisherman in Jos, northern Nigeria
- **GVE Projects Ltd.** will electrify 24 off-grid communities using metered solar photovoltaic micro-grid and portable rechargeable battery systems, targeted to customers' demands
- **Afe Babalola University** will investigate hydro-electric and solar system to serve students and faculty, and the neighboring community of 10,000+, who currently rely on diesel generators

This is a development opportunity waiting to happen. The Challenge is on, the clock is ticking. USADF, GE Africa and USAID stand ready to support this next round of innovators and meet this challenge head on. The time is now!